

Early Learning Council Executive Committee Meeting

February 11, 2013

11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Chicago – Illinois State Board of Education, JRTC, 14th Floor Videoconference Room

Springfield – Illinois State Board of Education, Alinza Building, 3rd Floor Videoconference Room

Minutes

Participants

Chicago – Karen Berman, Jeanna Capito, Gaylord Gieseke, Phyllis Glink, Daniel Fitzgerald, Dan Harris, Theresa Hawley, Reyna Hernandez, Teresa Kelly, Jan Maruna, Beth Mascitti-Miller, Harriet Meyer, Sylvia Puente, Diana Rauner, Elliot Regenstein, Vanessa Rich, Julie Smith, Sara Slaughter, Teri Talan, Maria Whelan, Kay Willmoth, Josie Yanguas

Springfield – Jan Maruna, Linda Saterfield, Cindy Zumwalt

Phone – George Davis, Phyllis Glink

I. Welcome and Introductions

Harriet Meyer welcomed the Executive Committee. She emphasized that this meeting is an opportunity for members to delve into some of the big discussions the Executive Committee needs to have.

a. Minutes

The minutes were approved.

II. Committee Recommendations

a. **Family and Community Engagement:** Recommendation to Governor Quinn to support Illinois' expansion of early childhood facilities in high-need communities in his FY14 capital budget.

-Approved unanimously

b. **Systems Integration and Alignment:** System Integration and Alignment Committee's recommendation for changes to Rule 407 and its procedures related to obesity prevention (nutrition, physical activity and screen-time standards) for consideration by DCFS.

-Approved unanimously and fast tracked for DCFS

III. ELC – The Big Picture

Theresa Hawley thanked members for meeting with her individually since the last meeting. She suggested continuing to do so on a semi-annual basis. She then asked members for suggestions on how to improve full Council meetings.

- Working on a graphic that shows in a cohesive way all the things the ELC is targeting
- Restructuring goes hand-in-hand with these efforts
- People like webinars, especially getting updates on topics
- Given all the changes, could we create an updated organizational chart?
- Do the advisory bodies serve as subcommittees?
 - No – they are more like liaisons.
- We need to not lose sight of the way we communicate things. The more dense the material, the tougher it is to convey to any audience, but especially to the general public.
- ELC meetings should include presentations by an expert in the field.

- Perhaps we could spend 5 minutes at the beginning and/or end of the meeting talking to someone you don't know. We don't know everyone in the room and we don't hear from each other enough on organizational levels.
- We could focus on cross-cutting topics that matter to everyone, and they could become the themes for the meetings. We can't lose sight of the cross-sector nature of our work.
- We should use the meetings of the full Council to maximize interaction time, to set parameters and to assign more specific tasks to the committees.
- We need a better sense of rural communities, their specific needs and how what we recommend or decide will impact them.
- The full Council meetings should be shorter, more of recaps than they are.
- We need to get the equilibrium right between Council members having information on recommendations (and not being unaware of what they're being asked to approve) versus getting too deep into the weeds of issues.
- Many people make a big effort to make it to the full Council meetings when where we really need them to participate is in the committees, sub-committees and task forces.

IV. **Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge**

Theresa Hawley informed members that the grant implementation team working on the updated Scopes of Work that are due by 3/29. She also noted that a process for sharing updates with the Executive Committee will need to be developed.

- Community Systems
 - No RFP will be issued. Rather, there's a grant to Action for Children, which is very open to working with others to get the work done.
- Good to Great
 - Perhaps we have a conference open to all for people who have done work on this to present
 - We could issue RFIs.
 - We have a daunting task ahead of us, especially when you consider where our centers are at currently. When I think about resource allocation, we need to develop language that affirms every step of progress centers make, not just the last step of "good" to "great." We're going to have centers in Lincoln Park touting their excellence and centers in North Lawndale being happy at level 1.
 - This reminds me of what Arne Duncan described as "pockets of excellence." How do we make excellence the North Star and expand the impact beyond those select centers?
 - We need to change the language – "good to great" is too subjective.
 - It's really important for us to show what we're talking about. People want to be good/better. When we create a group of parents who demand quality programs, that's how things will really change.
 - I'm noticing a shift in expectations regarding centers attaining a 4 versus attaining a 5.
 - Remember that "adequate" to "good" is also a big part of the grant, and that we're not working a vacuum; many other systems are being built up at the same time.
- Higher Education/Training
 - We need a plan for this portion of the grant.

- Loyola University is doing some very creative things around ESL endorsements – they’re a good example of thinking outside the box.
- This is a larger conversation than just the early learning world. It involves many players and we can’t really have the conversation in isolation of them. We need to have a broader strategy.
- Members recommended clarifying the purpose of these pieces (like what was done with the SAC grant).
- Licensing Small Child Care Homes
 - We are going to form a small task force to look into this. Let us know if you are interested in participating.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned.